

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 /070 W
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O R 311955Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7656
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY GUATZMWLW
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVWDOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCILPAPW
LRUESJO/WMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 2349
WMEMBASSY CARACAS 0311

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAGUA 4099

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY VWKY, ARA/LA
LE.O. 11652: GDS
TWGS: PINS, PINT. SHUM.HVZ, NU
SUBJECT; AMB MEETS WPTH SOMOZA 30 AUGUST

REF; STATE 218953

SUMMARY: PURSUANT TO REFTEL, AMB MADE HUMAN RIGHTS DEMARCHE.
CONVERSATION PRODUCED ILLUMINATING INSIGHT INTO SOMOZAS
THOUGHT PROCESS AND CONFIRMED HIS INTENTION TO REMAIN IN
POWER UNTIL 1901. END SUMMARY.

1. PURSUANT TO INSTRUCTIONS (REFTEL)9 AMB MET WITH SOMOZA
FOR 50 MINUTES ON 30 AUGUST. SOMOZA STATED THAT A TOTAL
CONFRONTATION WAS OCCURRING AND THAT THERE WAS REAL TROUBLE.
AMB TOLD HIM THAT "ALTHOUGH USG KNOWS THAT YOU UNDERSTAND
THWT. IF YOU REACT IN A REPRESSIVE MANNER, THIS COULD WORSEN
THE SITUATION, I HAVE. NEVERTHELESS, BEEN INSTRUCTED TO
INFORM YOU OF MY GOVERNMENTS POSITION." AMB SAID
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THAT DEPARTMENT WANTED SOMOZA TO KNOW "THAT THE BEST
HOPE FOR A PEACEFUL, DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION (WHICH WE ARE
SURE ARE OBJECTIVES YOU SHARE) WOULD BE FOR YOU TO
IMPLEMENT YOUR ANNOUNCED INTENTIONS TO EFFECT A GENUINE
REFORM OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND RESPECT HUMAN
RIGHTS."

2. SOMOZA AGREED THAT HE SHOULD NOT OVER-REACT. HE SAID HE HAD SHOWED THIS CLEARLY DURING THE FSLN NATIONAL PALACE ATTACK AND BY THE FACT THAT HE HAD NOT JAILED ANY STRIKE LEADERS. HOWEVER. HE WANTED CLARIFICATION OF THE SECOND PART OF THE STATEMENT. SOMOZA WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE WANTED AMB TO FORMALLY TELL WASHINGTON THAT HE WOULD NOT LEAVE POWER UNTIL 1981 AND WOULD THEN DELIVER POWER TO THE PERSON ELECTED. HE WANTED THE AMB TO TELL BOTH STATE AND DOD THAT HE WAS NOT GOING TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY AND LET IT FALL INTO CHAOS. IF HE LEFT, HE SAID. CHAOS WOULD PREVAIL. RAISING HIS VOICE. HE SAID HE WANTED THE AMB TO TELL THE

DEPARTMENT THAT, IF AMB CAME TO TELL HIM HE HAD TO LEAVE POWER BEFORE 1981, HE WOULD "KICK" AMB OUT OF NICARAGUA.

3. AMB RESPONDED THAT, CLEARLY, HE WOULD ONLY MAKE SUCH A DECLARATION UNDER INSTRUCTIONS AND NOT FOR PERSONAL REASONS AND SAID THAT HE HOPED SOMOZA UNDERSTOOD THAT. CALMING DOWN, SOMOZA SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT PERSONALITIES WERE NOT INVOLVED, BUT THAT HE WANTED AMB TO KNOW THAT PART OF THE PROBLEMS HAVE STEMMED FROM AMBS ACTIVITIES WHICH GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT USG DID NOT BACK HIM ANY. SINCE, WERE ENCOURAGING THE OPPOSITION TO TRY TO OVERTHROW HIM. CONFIDENTIAL

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AMB REPLIED THAT SOMOZA KNEW THAT HE WAS FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS BY ENCOURAGING ALL GROUPS TO TRY TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT AND SEEK COMPROMISE. SOMOZA RESPONDED THAT THE CONSTITUTION COULD NOT BE COMPROMISED AND HE MUST REMAIN UNTIL 1981. THE AMB STATED HIS BELIEF THAT THE GON HAD ERRED IN CANCELLING THE CHARTER OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AN ACTION WHICH ENCOURAGED INDE AND CADIN TO SUPPORT THE STRIKE. DURING THE FEBRUARY STRIKE, THE SAME THING HAD OCCURRED GON OVERREACTION HAD PROLONGED IT, AMBASSADOR SAID.

4. SOMOZA REPLIED THAT HE KNEW BUSINESSMEN WERE VERY UPSET BECAUSE HE SAID HE WOULD "AUCTION" THEIR BUSINESSES. BUT HE WANTED TO MAKE THE POINT TO THE GOV THAT IT WOQLD NOT COST \$2 MILLION. BUT \$10 OR \$30 MILLION TO FINANCE THE STRIKE HERE. HE SAID THAT THE AMB MUST UNDERSTAND THAT HIS FRIEND, THE US, WAS TYING ONE HAND BEHIND HIS BACK, WHILE "YOUR" (I.E., U.S.) ADVERSARIES (I.E. A VENEZUELAN) WERE AFTER HIM. SOMOZA SAID HE WOULD NOT OVERREACT; THE GN WOULD NOT SHOOT ANYONE WHO DID NOT FIRST SHOOT AT IT, BUT SOMOZA THEN RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHAT REFORMS

THE USG WANTED IMPLEMENTED. HE SAID THAT, AT USG
URGING. HE HAD ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION OF LEAVING THE
PRESIDENCY IN 1981. STEPPING DOWN FROM THE GN AND
HIS WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE ELECTORAL LAW, ADDING THAT
THE OPPOSITION REMAINED UNWILLING TO TALK TO HIM.
THE AMB EXPRESSED HIS VIEW THAT THE PROBLEM WAS
IN THE FACT THAT THE MODERATE OPPOSITION WANTED THE GOM
TO MAKE SOME UNILATERAL CONCESSIONS, BUT AS A PRE-
CONDITION TO NEGOTIATIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOMOZA,
WHILE GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS. WAS UNWILLING TO MAKE
STRUCTURAL REFORMS PRIOR TO NEGOTIATIONS.

6. SOMOZA ASKED, "WHAT CONCESSIONS MUST I GIVE?" THE
AMB RESPONDED THAT HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO TELL HIM WHAT
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CONCESSIONS TO MAKE AS HIS INSTRUCTIONS FORBODE THIS. BUT
THAT SOMOZA WAS SURELY AWARE OF THE CONCESSIONS DESIRED BY THE
OPPOSITION AS A TEST OF HIS WILLINGNESS TO LEAVE POWER.
THE AMB HOPED THAT AFTER THE STRIKE ENDED,
INSTEAD OF REACTING VINDICTIVELY SOMOZA WOULD
MAGNANIMOUSLY RESPOND TO AT LEAST SOME OPPOSITION DEMAND
TO SEE IF IMPASSE COULD BE BROKEN. SOMOZA INDICATED
THAT HE WOULD CONSIDER SOME CONTACTS TO DETERMINE WHAT
CONCESSIONS WERE DESIRED AND WOULD "SEE WHAT HE COULD DO."

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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O R 011955Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7657

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MANAGUA 4099

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY VAKY, ARA/LW

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR PARA SEVEN

HE THEN SPOKE OF THE WEAKNESS OF THE OPPOSITION AND THE STRENGTH OF THE PLN AND GN. CRITICIZING THE OPPOSITION, SOMOZA SAID THEY WERE "RIDICULOUS". SANDINISTAS TRUSTED ME IN NEGOTIATIONS, WHY CAN'T THESE PEOPLE TRUST ME AS WELL? THE SANDINISTAS ARE OBVIOUSLY MORE REALISTIC. THESE PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT I AM ONLY 52; IF I WERE TO LEAVE TOMORROW, LIKE PERON, I WOULD ULTIMATELY BE CALLED BACK BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN VERY GOOD TO EVERYONE-- EVEN CONSERVATIVES AND BUSINESSMEN. THE PROBLEM IS NOT SOLVED WITH MY RESIGNATION. WHAT WE NEED IS SOME LEADER TO REPLACE ME. I KNOW THAT I CANNOT CONTINUE TO RULE THIS MORE COMPLEX SOCIETY AS IN THE PAST, BUT I ALSO HAVE A RIGHT TO FEEL INSECURE AND GET SOME GUARANTEES SO THAT I CAN LEAVE POWER IN A COUNTRY AT PEACE.

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7. SOMOZA WAS VERY CRITICAL OF THE ARCHBISHOP FOR GOING TO MATAGALPA AND ATTEMPTING TO INDUCE THE GN TO STOP SHOOTING. HE VIEWED THIS AS A TERRIBLE THING TO DO. HE ADDED THAT, FOR YEARS, HE HAD ATTEMPTED TO DESTROY AREVALO IN GUATEMALA, AGUERO IN NICARAGUA AND OTHER LEADERS. IN THOSE INSTANCES WHEN HE REALIZED HE COUNDN'T SUCCEED, AS WITH AREVALO, HE THEN DEALTH WITH THEM, CLEARLY, HE SAID HE WAS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE. ON THREE OCCASIONS, HE HAD RECONSTITUTED THE ENTIRE COUNTRY OUT OF SHAMBLES AND HE COULD DO IT AGAIN NOW AS LONG AS THE OPPOSITION WAS CONVINED THE USG BACKED HIM UNTIL 1981.

8. COMMENT: THIS CONVERSATION CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES SOMOZA'S VIEW OF HIS "MISSION." WITH A FERVOR BORDERING ON FIXATION, HE HAS NO INTENTION OF CONSIDERING ANY ALTERNATIVE TO COMPLETION OF HIS TERM NOR OF MAKING CONCESSIONS PRIOR TO FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS CLEAR THAT SOMOZA IS UNWILLING TO COMPROMISE AND GIVE INDICATION THAT HE WISHES TO LEAVE REAL POWER. WITH THE OPPOSITION NOT IN A POSITION TO OVERTHROW HIM AND FORCE HIM TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS, THE SITUATION HAS DETERIORATED, WITH A LIKELY PROSPECT OF INCREASED VIOLENCE AS THE MODERATE OPPOSITION BECOMES MORE RADICALIZED (MANAGUA 4085), AND EVENTUALLY LOSES INFLUENCE. SOLAUN

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Message Attributes

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